

**FEBRUARY 10, 2000**

**REPRESENTATIVE SCHAKOWSKY, CONGRESSIONAL DEMOCRATS JOIN PRESIDENT CLINTON TO UNVEIL 2000 FAMILIES FIRST AGENDA      BOB HATCHER, CEO FROM CHICAGO, SPEAKS AT EVENT**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today expressed her strong support for the 2000 Democratic Families First Agenda aimed at improving the quality of life for working families, children, and seniors.□ Schakowsky joined Congressional Democrats and President Clinton at a news conference to unveil the agenda.□

Also speaking at today's event was Mr. Robert "Bob" Hatcher, Chairman of the Minority Business Roundtable, and a successful Chicago businessman who has seen his business grow because of the strong economy.□ Mr. Hatcher is the CEO of Chicago Truck Center, Incorporated, which now employees 500 people and generates more than \$700 million in revenues.

"Our agenda mirrors the priorities of the American people: retirement security, first rate education, economic prosperity and access to quality healthcare.□ It is an ambitious plan that will help lead the way to a better future for all people," Schakowsky said.

Schakowsky added, "My constituents tell me that they do not want a repeat of last year when the Republicans stood in the way of progress and refused to come to the negotiating table.□ The American people want us to work together to extend the life of Social Security and Medicare, give our seniors access to affordable drugs, and protect patients from HMO abuses.□ The President and the Democrats in Congress are ready to get the job done.□ It is now up to the Republicans to listen to the will of the people."

Items in the 2000 Democratic Families First Agenda include: Investing the surplus to strengthen Social Security and Medicare and pay down the debt.□ The Democratic agenda guarantees that all of the Social Security surplus will be used to extend the solvency of the program for at least 50 years; reserves a portion of the non Social Security surplus to extend the solvency of Medicare; and pays off the national debt by 2013.

Protecting and modernizing Medicare and provide an affordable prescription drug benefit for all seniors.□ The Democratic agenda will extend the solvency of Medicare until 2025, modernize the program, and add a voluntary universal prescription drug benefit so that millions of seniors have access to affordable drugs.

Passing a real Patients' Bill of Rights.□ Passing a Patients' Bill of Rights that lets medical professionals and patients make medical decisions not HMO bureaucrats, and will hold HMO accountable for their actions.

**Raising the minimum wage, enforcing equal pay for women, and extending the economic prosperity.**

**In addition to the initiatives mentioned above, Schakowsky said that Democrats would work to increase our national commitment to public education, environmental protection, tax relief for working families and consumer privacy.**